

# BEHIND THE CURTAIN

## A CREATIVE & THEATRICAL RESOURCE GUIDE FOR TEACHERS

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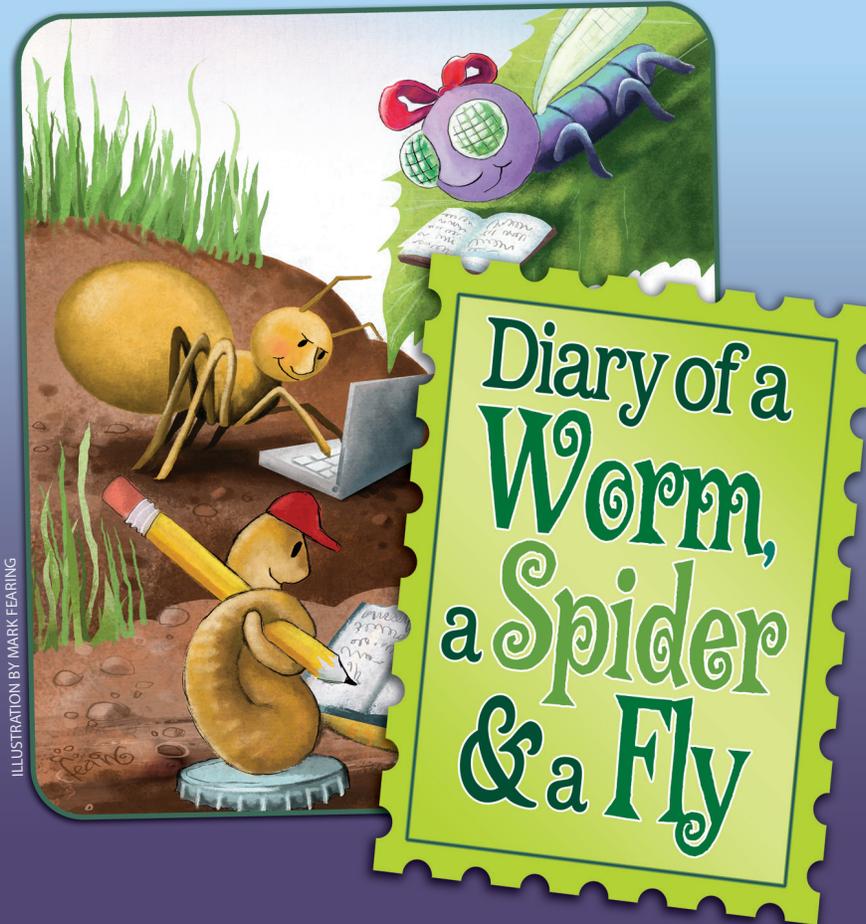


ILLUSTRATION BY MARK FEARING

Book, Music and Lyrics by JOAN CUSHING  
Adapted from the books by DOREEN CRONIN Illustrations by HARRY BLISS

**GRADES PRE-K through 4th**

**MAY 4 - MAY 25** STUDENT MATINEE

**MAY 4 - JUNE 3** PUBLIC SHOWS

As part of DCT's mission to integrate the arts into classroom academics, the ***Behind the Curtain Resource Guide*** is intended to provide helpful information for the teacher and student to use before and after attending a performance. The activities presented in this guide are suggested to stimulate lively responses and multi-sensory explorations of concepts in order to use the theatrical event as a vehicle for cross-cultural and language arts learning.

**Please use our suggestions as springboards to lead your students into meaningful, dynamic learning; extending the dramatic experience of the play.**

Your Family Arts Center

# DALLAS CHILDREN'S THEATER

Astonishing kids & families with the fun of Broadway-like plays & a lot more!

Dallas Children's Theater

# BEHIND THE CURTAIN

A Creative & Theatrical Resource Guide for Teachers

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Play ..... DIARY OF A WORM, A SPIDER & A FLY

Based on the book by ..... Doreen Cronin

Illustrations by ..... Harry Bliss

Adapted by ..... Joan Cushing

Director of Production..... Bob Hess

Cover Art..... Mark Fearing

DALLAS CHILDREN'S THEATER, one of the top five family theaters in the nation, serves over 250,000 young people from 100 zip codes, 40 cities and 12 counties each year through its nine main stage productions, touring, educational programming and outreach activities. Since its opening in 1984, this award-winning theater has existed to create challenging, inspiring and entertaining theater, which communicates vital messages to our youth and promotes an early appreciation for literature and the performing arts. As the only major organization in Dallas focusing on theater for youth and families, DCT produces literary classics, original scripts, folktales, myths, fantasies and contemporary dramas that foster multicultural understanding, confront topical issues and celebrate the human spirit.

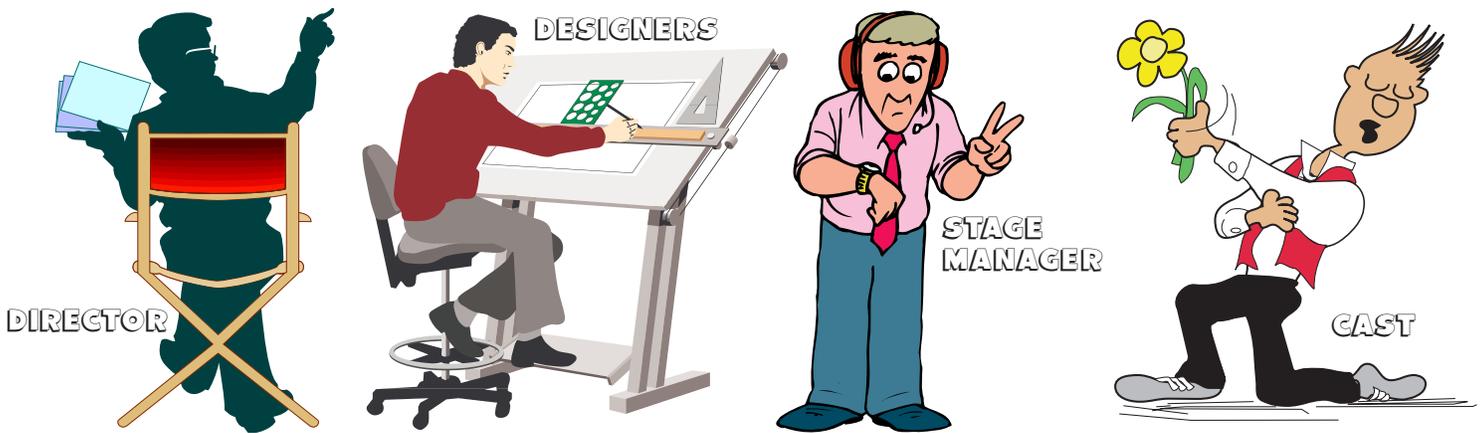
DCT is committed to the integration of creative arts into the teaching strategies of academic core curriculum and educating through the arts. Techniques utilized by DCT artist/teachers are based upon the approach developed in *Making Sense with Five Senses*, by Paul Baker, Ph.D.

DCT founder and Executive Artistic Director, Robyn Flatt defines the artistic mission and oversees the operations of the organization, consisting of twenty-five full time staff members and more than 200 actors, designers, theater artists and educators.

**See page 14 for the TEKS that your field trip to  
Dallas Children's Theater satisfies!**

# CURTAINS UP ON PUTTING TOGETHER A PERFORMANCE

Every DCT performance you see is the result of many people working together to create a play. You see the cast perform on stage, but there are people that you do not see who help before, during, and after every production.



## Director

- Determines the overall performance “look” of the performance
- Guides the actors in stage movement and character interpretation
- Works with designers to plan the lights and sound, scenery, costumes and make-up, and stage actions

## Designers

- Plan the lights, scenery, costumes, make-up, sound, and actions to help bring the director’s vision to life
- There are also designers who work to create the posters, advertisements, programs and other media for the performance.

## Stage Manager

- Before the performance, creates a cuesheet to guide the crew in getting things on and off the stage during the performances.
- During the performance, the stage manager uses this cuesheet to direct people and things on and off the stage at the proper times.

## Crew

- Build and operate the scenery, costumes, props, and light and sound during the performances.

## Cast

- Includes all of the performers who present the story on stage.

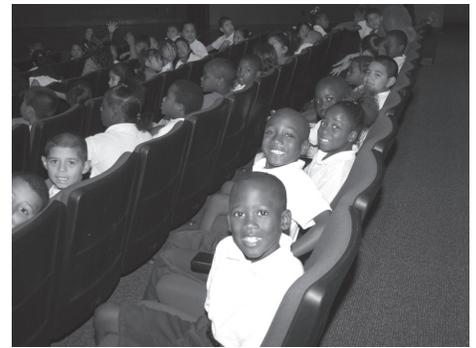
## Audience

- That’s right! There can be no performance without you, the audience. The role of the audience is unique because you experience the entertainment with the performers and backstage crew. You are a collaborator in the performance and it is important to learn your role so you can join all the people who work to create this DCT production.

# CURTAINS UP ON THE ROLE OF THE AUDIENCE

Watching a play is different from watching television or a sporting event. When you watch T.V. you may leave the room or talk. At a sporting event you might cheer and shout and discuss what you're seeing. Your role as a member of the audience in a play means you must watch and listen carefully because-

- You need to concentrate on what the actors are saying.
- The actors are affected by your behavior because they share the room with you. Talking and moving around can make it difficult for them to concentrate on their roles.
- Extra noises and movement can distract other audience members.



**GIVE IT  
A TRY!**

## Are you ready for your role in this performance?

Check the box next to the statements that describe proper etiquette for an audience member.

- Try your best to remain in your seat once the performance has begun.
- Share your thoughts out loud with those sitting near you.
- Wave and call out to the actors on stage.
- Sit on your knees or stand near your seat.
- Bring snacks and gum to enjoy during the show.
- Reward the cast and crew with applause when you like a song or dance and at the end of the show.
- Arrive on time so that you do not miss anything or disturb other audience members while you are being seated.
- Keep all hands and feet and items out of the aisles during the performance.

# CURTAINS UP ON THEATER VOCABULARY

Actor	any theatrical performer whose job it is to portray a character
Cast	group of actors in a play
Center Stage	the middle of the stage
Character	any person portrayed by an actor onstage. Characters may often be people, animals, and sometimes things.
Choreographer	the designer and teacher of the dances in a production
Costume designer	the person who creates what the actors wear in the performance
Director	the person in charge of the actors' movements on stage
Downstage	the area at the front of the stage; closest to the audience
House	where the audience sits in the theater
Lighting Designer	the person who creates the lighting for a play to simulate the time of day and the location
Onstage	the part of the stage the audience can see
Offstage	the part of the stage the audience cannot see
Playwright	the person who writes the script to be performed. Playwrights may write an original story or adapt a story by another author for performance.
Plot	the story line
Proscenium	the opening framing the stage
Project	to speak loudly
Prop	an object used by an actor in a scene
Set	the background or scenery for a play
Setting	the time and place of the story
Sound Designer	the person who provides special effects like thunder, ringing phone, or crickets chirping
Stage Crew	the people who change the scenery during a performance
Stage Manager	the person who helps the director during the rehearsal and coordinates all crew during the performance
Upstage	the area at the back of the stage; furthest from the audience

# CURTAINS UP AFTER THE PERFORMANCE

Attending a play is an experience unlike any other entertainment experience. Because a play is presented live, it provides a unique opportunity to experience a story “as it happens”. Dallas Children’s Theater brings to life stories through its performances. Many people are involved in the process. Writers adapt the stories you read in order to bring them off the page and on to the stage. Designers and technicians create lighting effects so that you can feel the mood of a scene. Carpenters build scenery and make the “place” of the story become a real place, while costumers and make-up designers can turn actors into the characters you meet in the stories. Directors help actors bring the story to life and make it happen before your very eyes. All of these things make seeing a play very different from television, videos, computer games, or CDs and tapes of stories.

Hold a class discussion when you return from the performance. Ask students the following questions and allow them to write or draw pictures of their experience at DCT.

1. What was the first thing you noticed when you entered the theater? What did you notice first on the stage?
2. What about the set? Draw or tell about things you remember. Did the set change during the play? How was it moved or changed? Was there any space besides the stage where the action took place?
3. How did the lights set the mood of the play? How did they change throughout? What do you think “house lights” are? How do they differ from stage lights? Did you notice different areas of lighting?
4. What did you think about the costumes? Do you think they fit the story? What things do you think the costume designers had to consider before creating the costumes?
5. Was there music in the play? How did it add to the performance?
6. What about the actors? Do you think they were able to bring the characters to life? Did you feel caught up in the story? What things do you think the actors had to work on in order to make you believe they were the characters?



**GIVE IT  
A TRY!**

- Draw a picture of what the audience might look light from the stage. Consider your work from the viewpoint of the actors on stage. How might things look from where they stand?
- Write a letter to a cast member telling what you liked about the character.
- Write how you think it might feel to be one of the actors. Are the actors aware of the audience? How might they feel about the reactions of the audience today? How would you feel before the play began? What about after the show ends?
- Which job would you like to try? Acting, Directing, Lighting and Sounds, Stage Manager, Set designer, Costume designer or another role? What skills might you need to complete your job?
- Choose a favorite story and draw or use the computer to create a program cover design for a theatrical adaptation of your story.

## CURTAINS UP ON ADAPTATION

An adaptation is a change made in something so that it can fit a new use. This performance of *Diary of a Worm, a Spider and a Fly* is an adaptation of a book, which is meant to be read, into a play, which is meant to be performed and viewed. Joan Cushing worked to take the story written by Doreen Cronin and adapt it so that it could be performed for an audience on stage.

### Consider these questions for discussion before you attend the DCT production:

- What kinds of things did the authors have to consider in writing a script of the story?
- What kinds of things would Doreen Cronin be concerned about in having someone make a musical adaptation of her story?
- Do you think the performance will be shorter or longer than the book?
- What will the characters look like? Will they match their illustrations? What differences can you expect?
- What about the story? What changes might you expect in adapting it for the stage? Why would these changes be necessary?

### After the performance, consider these questions:

- Were there any characters or events that were in the book but not in the play? Why do you think these choices were made?
- Did the changes make the story stronger or was it weaker because of them?
- What do you think the set and costume designers need to consider when bringing the book to the stage?
- What things helped to tell the story on stage?



**GIVE IT  
A TRY!**

Use the compare and contrast template on the next page to illustrate the similarities and differences between the book and DCT's performance of *Diary of a Worm, a Spider and a Fly*.

## CURTAINS UP ON THE AUTHOR

**DOREEN CRONIN** is the New York Times bestselling author of *Diary of a Worm*, *Diary of a Spider*; as well as *Click, Clack, Moo: Cows That Type*, a Caldecott Honor Book; and *Giggle, Giggle, Quack*. She lives in Brooklyn, NY, with her husband and their daughters.

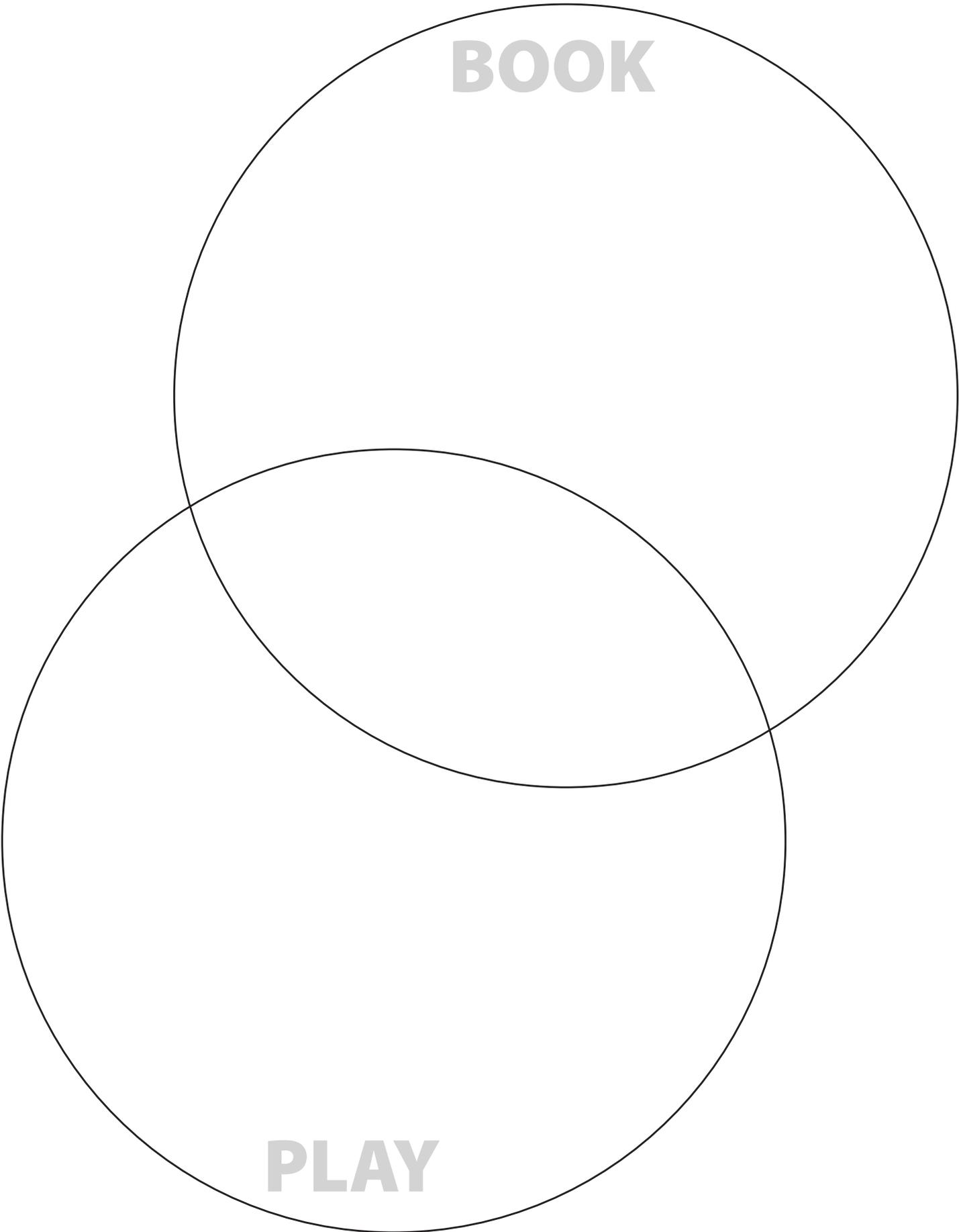
## CURTAINS UP ON THE PLAYWRIGHT

**JOAN CUSHING** Best known for her political satirical revue *Mrs. Foggybottom & Friends*, which ran for 10 hit years at the Omni-Shoreham Hotel in Washington, D.C., more recently Cushing has turned her hand to adapting popular children's books as musicals, receiving over 300 productions and 3 national tours. Works include *Miss Nelson Is Missing!*, *Miss Nelson Has a Field Day*, *Junie B. Jones & a Little Monkey Business*, *Petite Rouge: A Cajun Red Riding Hood*, and *Heidi* (with Martha King De Silva), all commissioned by IMAGINATION STAGE; and *Brave Irene*, commissioned by ADVENTURE THEATRE. More recent works include *The Christmas Doll*, 2007 National Youth Theatre Award for Outstanding New Play/Musical, world premiere CHILDREN'S THEATRE OF CHARLOTTE; *Lizzie Bright & the Buckminster Boy*, FIRST STAGE MILWAUKEE, New Play Series, and three world premieres this season: *George and Martha* for IMAGINATION STAGE, *Diary of a Worm, A Spider & A Fly* for OREGON CHILDREN'S THEATRE, and *If You Give a Mouse a Cookie* for ROANOKE CHILDREN'S THEATRE. Ms. Cushing lives in the Nation's Capital with her husband Paul Buchbinder. If you would like more information on Joan Cushing, try [www.joancushing.com](http://www.joancushing.com) on the web.

**COMPARE AND CONTRAST TEMPLATE**

**BOOK**

**PLAY**



# CURTAINS UP ON ART

## PAPER BAG PUPPETS

### You will need:

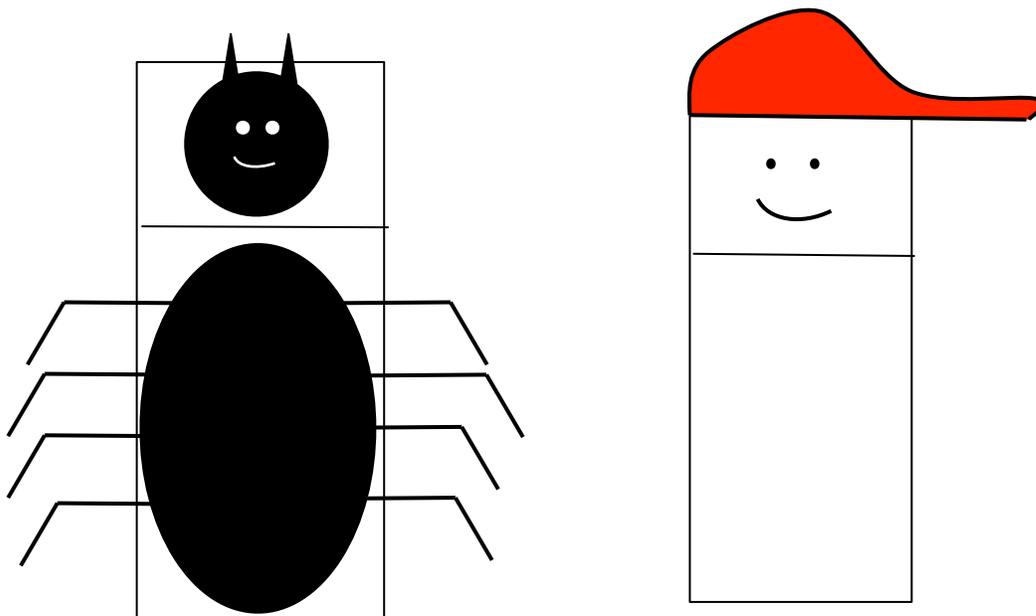
- Paper lunch sacks
- Red and black construction paper
- Black chenille stems
- Scissors
- Glue stick
- Black marker

Provide each student with a paper lunch sack, scissors, and glue stick. Students who choose to make the spider puppet will need a sheet of black construction paper and four chenille stems while students making the worm will need a half sheet of red construction paper to make his cap.

The worm puppet is made by cutting a cap shape from a half sheet of construction paper. Students should make certain they draw the cap on the long side of the paper before cutting it out. Glue the cap to the top of the flap portion of the paper sack and add a face using black marker or crayons.

The spider puppet is made with a large oval of black paper for the body and a smaller circle for the head. The head is glued to the top flap of the sack while the body is glued to the sack's front. Chenille stems can be cut in half and attached to the sides of the body with glue.

Encourage students to re-enact or create their own scenes using their hand puppets.



## CURTAINS UP ON ART (continued)

### FINGERPRINT PAINTINGS

#### You will need:

Fingerpaints or stamp pads

Plain or manila drawing paper

Crayons, markers or colored pencils

Provide students with paper, paint or stamp pads and drawing materials. Help them press their fingerprints onto the paint or pad and press firmly on the drawing paper. When the fingerprints have dried, encourage students to use the markers, crayons or pencils to add “features” and create imaginary fingerprint bugs: spiders, worms, and flies. If there is time, add a background to the pictures to create a story illustration.

## CURTAINS UP ON WRITING

Authors sometimes use a convention called **personification** whereby they give creatures who are not human characteristics that are human in order to help tell their stories. In *Diary of a Worm, and Spider & a Fly*, Doreen Cronin gave a worm, a spider, and a fly human characteristics in order to entertain readers and teach them about these bugs. Discuss the characteristics the author gave to each of the characters to personify them and list them on a chart.



**USE WHAT  
YOU KNOW!**

Choose an animal or object you like or know and write a diary entry in which you personify the object or animal and provide insight into its day or week. Consider the characteristics your object might need to help ‘tell’ its tale.

## CURTAINS UP ON READING

### FACT OR FICTION?

Students often think story tellers make up all of the characters, events, and information presented in their stories. *Diary of a Worm, a Spider & a Fly* includes some factual information about these bugs. Use the following activity to explore fact and fiction with your students.

Hold a class discussion encouraging students to list different events from the play. List them on the board or chart paper as they are mentioned. When you have a nice list, discuss with students the difference between facts and fictions helping them understand that while the story they saw is make-believe, there are facts that can be learned from it. Look at your list and help students determine what things from the play might be fact.

Use the following questions to help springboard your discussion:

Do worms live underground?

Are they good diggers?

Can spiders and flies read and write?

## WIGGLY WORM ESTIMATION

Estimation is fundamental to understanding the concept of measurement because it requires students to recognize a context for establishing the relative need for accuracy. Students need many opportunities to estimate as it build confidence in the reasonableness of answers, it is basic to predictions, and it aids in the development of spatial awareness.

### **You will need:**

- Unopened packages of gummy worms
- Masking tape
- Markers, crayons or colored pencils
- A variety of objects of different lengths
- A piece of string
- Wiggly Worm Estimation Record Sheet

First, divide your class into pairs and provide each with a bag of gummy worms, crayons or markers, and a copy of the Wiggly Worm Estimation Record Sheet (page 12.) Ask students to estimate the number of worms of each color in their bags before opening them and record the estimate on the record sheet.

Next, allow students to open the bags and count and record the actual number of worms and their colors to check their estimations. Provide time for the class to compare their findings and to discuss possible reasons for the varying number of worms in each bag. Determine with your students whether all the bags had the same colors of worms. Extend the activity by providing students with a number of items of varying lengths and ask them to sort them according to length in gummy worms. Use the distinction of “longer or shorter than one gummy” to help them sort. Once they’ve sorted the worms, allow students time to verify or confirm their estimates and discuss their strategies and success.

Finally, work as a class to estimate and measure a large object in the classroom like the whiteboard or bulletin board, perhaps, a student’s height. Estimate the number of worms needed to measure the length and be sure to measure without gaps between the worms. Provide “clean” unopened bags of worms to eat at the end of the activity!

**CORNER**

**WIGGLY WORM ESTIMATION RECORD SHEETS**

**STEP 1. COLOR**

<b>COLOR</b>	<b>ESTIMATED NUMBER</b>	<b>EXACT NUMBER</b>

**STEP 2. LENGTH**

<b>ITEM</b>	<b>ESTIMATED NUMBER OF GUMMY WORMS</b>	<b>EXACT NUMBER OF GUMMY WORMS</b>

## **CURTAINS UP ON READING MORE**

### **Give these books a try:**

*Yucky Worms* by Vivian French

*Garden Wigglers: Earthworms in Your Backyard* by Nancy Loewen

*Max's Worm Cake* by Rosemary Wells

*The Worm Family* by Tony Johnston

### **Or try these by Doreen Cronin:**

*Click, Clack, Moo*

*Thump, Quack, Moo*

*A Busy Day at the Farm*

*M.O.M. (Mom Operating Manual)*

*Stretch*

*Bounce*

# T.E.K.S. satisfied by DIARY OF A WORM, A SPIDER & A FLY

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117.3 - Music, Kindergarten.

K.4 - Response/evaluation. The student responds to and evaluates music and musical performance.

A - Identify steady beat in musical performances.

117.4 - Theatre, Kindergarten.

K.5 - Response/evaluation. The student responds to and evaluates theatre and theatrical performances.

A - Begin to identify appropriate audience behavior.

C - Demonstrate awareness of the use of music, creative movement, and visual components in dramatic play.

D - Observe the performance of artists and identify theatrical vocations.

117.6 - Music, Grade 1.

1.6 - Response/evaluation. The student responds to and evaluates music and musical performance.

A - Distinguish between beat/rhythm, higher/lower, louder/softer, faster/slower, and same/different in musical performances.

117.7 - Theatre, Grade 1.

1.5 - Response/evaluation. The student responds to and evaluates theatre and theatrical performances.

A - Identify appropriate audience behavior.

C - Identify the use of music, creative movement, and visual components in dramatic play.

D - Observe the performance of artists and identify theatrical vocations.

117.9 - Music, Grade 2.

2.6 - Response/evaluation. The student responds to and evaluates music and musical performance.

A - Distinguish between beat/rhythm, higher/lower, louder/softer, faster/slower, and same/different in musical performances.

117.10 - Theatre, Grade 2.

2.5 - Response/evaluation. The student responds to and evaluates theatre and theatrical performances.

A - Identify and apply appropriate audience behavior.

C - Employ music, creative movement, and visual components in dramatic play.

D - Observe the performance of artists and identify theatrical vocations.

117.12 - Music, Grade 3.

3.6 - Response/evaluation. The student responds to and evaluates music and musical performance.

A - Define basic criteria for evaluating musical performances.

117.13 - Theatre, Grade 3.

3.5 - Response/evaluation. The student responds to and evaluates theatre and theatrical performances.

A - Evaluate and apply appropriate audience behavior consistently.

C - Incorporate music, movement, and visual components in dramatic play.

D - Observe the performance of amateur and professional artists and begin to compare vocations in theatre.

117.15 - Music, Grade 4.

4.6 - Response/evaluation. The student responds to and evaluates music and musical performance.

A - Apply basic criteria in evaluating musical performances and compositions.

117.16 - Theatre, Grade 4.

4.5 - Response/evaluation. The student responds to and evaluates theatre and theatrical performances.

A - Identify and apply appropriate audience behavior at performances.

C - Compare and contrast the ways ideas and emotions are depicted in art, dance, music, and theatre and select movement, music, or visual elements to enhance classroom dramatizations.

D - Compare theatre artists and their contributions.